

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

INFO AMCONSUL ST JOHNS

UNCLAS STATE 171407

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: MILI, MARR, CA, US

SUBJECT: SEVERANCE PAY FOR CANADIAN WORKERS AT GOOSE BAY

1. FOLLOWING LETTER DATED JULY 6, 1976 HAS BEEN RECEIVED BY 95TH SAC WING COMMANDER, GOOSE BAY, LABRADOR FROM WILLIAM ROMPKEY, CANADIAN M.P., REGARDING PAYMENT OF SEVERANCE PAY TO CANADIAN LOCAL HIRES AT GOOSE BAY.

BEGIN TEXT: DEAR SIR: FURTHER TO OUR CONVERSATION OF TODAY, I WOULD NOW ASK IF IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR THE USAF TO WITHHOLD PAYMENT OF SEVERANCE PAY TO THOSE EMPLOYEES WHO ARE TERMINATING AND WHO WOULD REQUEST SUCH AN ACTION FOR A PERIOD OF 32 WEEKS. THIS WOULD ALLOW THEM TO RECEIVE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS WHILE THEY SOUGHT OTHER EMPLOYMENT. AS YOU KNOW, THE GOC INTENDS TO AMEND ITS UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE LEGISLATION NEXT FALL AND ONE OF THE AMENDMENTS WILL BE TO CONSIDER SEVERANCE PAY AS DEFERRED SAVINGS RATHER THAN AS INCOME. THAT HAS ALREADY BEEN AGREED TO IN PRINCIPLE AND ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY THE MINISTER OF MANPOWER AND IMMIGRATION.

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I HAVE DISCUSSED THIS PARTICULAR SITUATION AT GOOSE BAY
WITH THE MINISTER AND WHILE HE IS IN AGREEMENT WITH THE

THE AMENDMENT IN PRINCIPLE IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO
MAKE THE NECESSARY CHANGES IN LEGISLATION UNTIL NEXT FALL.
THAT, OF COURSE, WILL BE TOO LATE TO BENEFIT YOUR PRE-
SENT EMPLOYEES WHO ARE TERMINATING. I UNDERSTAND FROM
THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION THAT THEY WOULD BE
PREPARED TO PUT IN WRITING CONFIRMATION THAT IN FACT ANY
SUCH ARRANGEMENT WHEREBY USAF WOULD DELAY SEVERANCE PAY
WOULD IN FACT BE OF BENEFIT TO CERTAIN EMPLOYEES AND
WOULD CERTAINLY NOT MEET ANY OBJECTION ON THE PART OF THE
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION. I SHALL BE GLAD TO
OBTAIN SUCH CONFIRMATION IN WRITING IF THAT IS DESIRABLE
OR NECESSARY. ANY ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENT TO HELP THE
EMPLOYEES IN QUESTION WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT AND
THIS WOULD SEEM TO BE THE APPROPRIATE SOLUTION.

IN THE INTEREST OF EMPLOYEE WELFARE AND IN VIEW OF THE
FACT THAT USAF HAS ENJOYED GOOD RELATIONS DURING ITS MANY
YEARS IN THIS PROVINCE NOT ONLY IN GOOSE BAY AND ELSE-
WHERE, I BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE AN APPROPRIATE GESTURE
FOR THE USAF TO MAKE AT THIS TIME IN THE INTEREST OF CON-
TINUING GOODWILL. I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT THERE IS A PRE-
CEDENT FOR SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT IN OTHER PARTS OF CANADA
IN THE PAST. ONE THAT COMES TO MIND IS THE CLOSEDOWN OF
THE EATON COMPANY OPERATION IN MONCTON, N.B. THERE
ARE OTHER INSTANCES THAT I CAN QUOTE AS WELL. I KNOW
THAT YOU WILL CONSIDER THIS SYMPATHETICALLY AND AS TIME
IS OF THE ESSENCE IF WE ARE TO BE OF ANY BENEFIT TO THESE
PEOPLE I HOPE THAT WE CAN HEAR FROM YOU AT THE EARLIEST
POSSIBLE TIME. THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST AND
ATTENTION. END TEXT.

2. EMBASSY IS REQUESTED TO INFORM EXTAFF OF CONTENTS
ABOVE LETTER AND SEEK ITS VIEWS AS TO WHETHER GOC CONCURS
IN ROMPKEY'S REQUEST. WHILE AWAITING REPORT OF GOC RE-
ACTION, INTERESTED WASHINGTON AGENCIES ARE STUDYING
ROMPKEY'S REQUEST TO DETERMINE ADVISABILITY AND LEGALITY
FROM US POINT OF VIEW. KISSINGER
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